

1 Samuel 29 - Thursday, September 25th, 2014

- Last week we left the Philistines having penetrated deep into the land belonging to the Israelites so as to defeat and destroy the Israelites.
- If this weren't bad enough, David and his men, who have been in Ziklag for better part of the last year and a half, are with the Philistines.
- This because, David fled from Saul, and in so doing, lied to Achish, only to find that now he is in a predicament where he must fight Israel.

1 Then the Philistines gathered together all their armies at Aphek, and the Israelites encamped by a fountain which is in Jezreel. 2 And the lords of the Philistines passed in review by hundreds and by thousands, but David and his men passed in review at the rear with Achish.

- What the Philistines do here is very effective on two fronts, first, it boosts the moral of the troops, and second, it intimidates the opposition.
- Actually, we see this parading of the troops in modern day warfare when Russia and North Korea, have this grand marching of their troops.
- Not only does it strengthen the courage of the troops, but it serves as a psychological warfare of sorts as it relates to the opposing army.

- Be that as it may David has a serious problem here and it's one for which he has no one but himself to blame in his parade with the enemy.
- The question becomes, what is David going to do about this? Is he really going to go through with this, and fight against his own people?
- I would suggest, David has not entirely shut God out of his life; such that he's still trusting God to deliver him out of that which he's caused.

- I can't even begin to imagine the amount of pressure David must be under right now. The reason being is he's the one that caused all this.
- Here's how I get there, Achish has been deceived and believed that David has been killing the Israelites for the last year and four months.
- As such, he's concluded that with David on his side, this would be the optimum time to launch an attack against Israel, and David knows it.

Of this one commentator wrote, "Hearing of Saul's mental imbalance and believing that David was on their side, the Philistines believed the time was opportune for an all-out attack upon Israel. ... Apparently, David must either fight against his own people or refuse to obey his liege lord, Achish. David deliberately gave Achish an ambiguous answer and then waited for God to deliver him from his embarrassing situation. His fleeing from his own country had got him into this difficulty."

- The fact of the matter is David getting himself into this difficulty is somewhat of an understatement by virtue of how much is at stake here.
- If you really think about it, this is a matter of life and death for David for several reasons not the least of which is that he could be found out.
- In other words, if the Philistines figure out that David is not really on their side, he, his six hundred men, and their families are dead ducks.
- Furthermore, were he fight against his own people, the very people he was anointed to be the king of he's still going to end up a dead duck.
- I suppose you could say that David needs a miracle from the mighty and merciful hand of God, and he needs this miracle to happen now!
- Thankfully, God, as He's always so faithful to do, will intervene on David's behalf in spite of the fact that he is an unworthy recipient of it.

2 Timothy 2:13-14 (NIV) 13 if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself. 14 Keep reminding God's people of these things. Warn them before God against quarreling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen.

Hebrews 13:5b-7 (NIV) 5b ... God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." 6 So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?" 7 Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.

3 Then the princes of the Philistines said, "What are these Hebrews doing here?" And Achish said to the princes of the Philistines, "Is this not David, the servant of Saul king of Israel, who has been with me these days, or these years? And to this day I have found no fault in him since he defected to me."

- Though the narrative isn't clear it seems that David is not part of this conversation that takes place between Achish and his military leaders.
- The reason I point that out is because God is working behind the scenes to rescue David even though he hasn't called upon the Lord for it.
- The point being is that it's not so much that God is going to rescue David it's more about how God is going to rescue David out of all this.

- Let me explain, God seemingly has to resort to drastic measures in order to deliver David from an unspeakable fate in the hands of Achish.
- More specifically, he has to use the Philistines in order to do that which David is incapable of in his backslidden state, running from God.
- You know it's bad when God has to use the world to deliver us from the world that we ran back to like a dog going back to his own vomit.

F.B. Meyer - "It is very terrible when the children of the world have a higher sense of Christian propriety and fitness than Christians themselves, and say to one another, 'What [are] these Hebrews [doing] here?'"

- What's striking to me is the response Achish gives to his military leaders when he takes the posture of defending David as one of them.
- This would seem to indicate that either David was really convincing in his deception, or that David was really becoming like the Philistines.
- I'm of the belief that in some measure, it was a little of both in that David's deception had lent itself to David himself also being deceived.

4 But the princes of the Philistines were angry with him; so the princes of the Philistines said to him, "Make this fellow return, that he may go back to the place which you have appointed for him, and do not let him go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he become our adversary. For with what could he reconcile himself to his master, if not with the heads of these men? 5 Is this not David, of whom they sang to one another in dances, saying: 'Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands'?"

- This just keeps getting more and more interesting by the minute as we now see the military leaders angrily confront Achish about David.
- They are making it very clear in no uncertain terms, that they will have no part in David going down into battle with their Philistine army.
- What I find most interesting are the two reasons that they give Achish as they make their argument against having David going with them.

- First, they argue that David poses a threat because in the heat of the battle he may turn against the Philistines and fight for his own people.
- Second, they also argue that David poses a threat because of his past track record in slaying tens of thousands of their Philistine brothers.
- In other words, David, whom they never mention by name, is a threat because of what he has done, and what he could do in the future.

- Here's where I'm going with this just as David poses a threat to the Philistines so too do we pose a threat to the devil for the same reasons.
- It's been said the devil is more threatened by what we have the potential of doing in the future than what we may be doing in the present.
- This is why the spiritual attack from the enemy in my life, is proportionate to the threat I pose to the enemy vis-à-vis God's call on my life.

6 Then Achish called David and said to him, "Surely, as the LORD lives, you have been upright, and your going out and your coming in with me in the army is good in my sight. For to this day I have not found evil in you since the day of your coming to me. Nevertheless the lords do not favor you. 7 Therefore return now, and go in peace, that you may not displease the lords of the Philistines."

- One can't help but wonder how it's possible that Achish could have developed such a fondness for David, as evidenced by what he says.
- Namely, his invoking of the name of the Lord God of Israel, as he seeks to soften the blow of telling David he cannot go to battle with them.
- Moreover, it's interesting to note that he would tell David how to this day, he had not found evil in him since the day he had come to them.

Of this Henry Morris writes, "It is interesting that the Philistine king here used the name of Jehovah, the God of Israel and the true God of creation."

One commentator offers this insight, "As the Lord lives is unexpected in a Philistine oath; can it be that Achish has committed himself to David's Lord, or is he being courteous to David in not swearing by Philistine gods? The latter is perhaps more likely."

- Regardless of why he says what he says, what could possibly be going through David's mind right about now, as he hears him say this?
- Is he thinking to himself that God has once again gotten him out of a disastrous situation of his own making, or is he feeling a little rejected.
- I'm of the opinion that it's both, such that God is using this to deliver him, even though both the Philistines and Israelites have rejected him.

One commentator explains it best this way, "No doubt, David didn't *like* being rejected by the Philistine rulers. Not many people like rejection. But God would *use* the rejection of ungodly people in David's life. Many people are hesitant to live out-and-out for Jesus Christ because they are afraid of the rejection of the ungodly. How much better it is to be all out for Jesus, and to trust that if the ungodly reject us, God will use it for good—for our good and for theirs."

- One more thought here before we move on to verse eight. It has to do with David trying to have one foot in the world and one in the Lord.
- Let me explain, David runs from God thinking that doing so will make his life easier, only to find instead, his life has become more difficult.
- This is a textbook case of one having too much of the Lord to be happy in the world, and too much of the world to be happy in the Lord.

8 So David said to Achish, "But what have I done? And to this day what have you found in your servant as long as I have been with you, that I may not go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king?"

- I don't know how else to say this except either David is a phenomenal actor, or he's genuinely disappointed that he can't battle with them.
- Either way, this is really bad. If he's acting, it's bad because of his continued deception, and if he's disappointed, then that's even worse.
- The reason being is that this would indicate that he might have actually gone to battle against Israel, which would have been David's end.

9 Then Achish answered and said to David, "I know that you are as good in my sight as an angel of God; nevertheless the princes of the Philistines have said, 'He shall not go up with us to the battle.' 10 Now therefore, rise early in the morning with your master's servants who have come with you. And as soon as you are up early in the morning and have light, depart."

- Clearly, this is God protecting David from himself, whether David realizes it or not. You might say that God has given him the perfect out.
- So much so, he can now take his men and go back to their families in Ziklag, which as we'll see next they'll be in for the shock of their lives.
- As bad as it will be at the very least God is making it known that he wants David completely out of Ziklag, and far away from the Philistines.

11 So David and his men rose early to depart in the morning, to return to the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel. 1 Now it happened, when David and his men came to Ziklag, on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the South and Ziklag, attacked Ziklag and burned it with fire,

- While I realize this is a terrible place for the chapter, and the Bible study to end, I think we would do well to understand what's happening.
- It seems the Amalekites, whom Saul was commanded to eliminate for this very reason, have taken advantage of this opportunity to attack.
- This because they knew it would be an opportune time given David and his men were joining the Philistines to battle against the Israelites.

- In the next chapter, we'll see that, in addition to burning Ziklag and everything they owned, the Amalekites took all their wives and children.

- The thought is that they would sell them into slavery, which made them much more valuable to the Amalekites than if they were to kill them.
- Needless to say, this will bring these hardened warriors, amongst whom David was chief, to their knees, literally, as they hit rock bottom.

- Here's the rock bottom line, pun intended, often times God will allow us to come to the end of ourselves so as to protect us from ourselves.

- Such is the case here with David, and in some ways it's painful to watch him in this place, especially knowing that it's of his own making.

- The point being is all of David's difficulties could have been avoided had he but trusted in the Lord instead of running away from the Lord.